

VZCZCXRO5027

PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHDA RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHLN  
RUEHLZ RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG  
DE RUEHNC #0181/01 0741112  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 141112Z MAR 08  
FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8661  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0885  
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 0322  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0166  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 2100  
RUEHKV/AMEMBASSY KYIV 0032  
RUEHMU/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA 0081  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0069  
RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO 0035  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 6430  
RUEHIK/AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI 0035  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 0113  
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1102  
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC  
RUEAHLA/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 07 NICOSIA 000181

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR G/TIP, INL, DRL, PRM AND EUR/PGI; STATE  
PLEASE PASS TO USAID

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KCRM](#) [PHUM](#) [KWMN](#) [SMIG](#) [KFRD](#) [ASEC](#) [PREF](#) [ELAB](#) [CY](#)

SUBJECT: REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS -- EIGHTH ANNUAL TIP REPORT  
SUBMISSION

REF: 07 STATE 02731

NICOSIA 00000181 001.2 OF 007

¶1. (U) Paras 3-6 are sensitive but unclassified -- not for internet distribution.

¶2. (U) Embassy Nicosia hereby submits information for the April 2007 - March 2008 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report. Embassy point of contact is Amy E. Dahm, Political Section, Tel: (357) 22-39-3345, Fax: (357) 22-39-3467. Approximately 40 hours (FSO-04) and 80 hours (FSN-10) were spent in preparing this material.

¶3. (SBU) Answers in this para are keyed to the questions in reftel, para 27, "Overview."

¶A. Cyprus is largely a destination country for trafficked women working in the commercial sex industry. Of the 40 women identified as victims of trafficking during the reporting period (April 1, 2007 to February 20, 2008), nine were from the Philippines, six from Russia, five from Moldova, four from Hungary, three from Ukraine, two each from Greece, Vietnam, Uzbekistan, and the Dominican Republic, and one each from Colombia, Romania, Belarus, Bulgaria and the UK. Most of the victims arrived in Cyprus on "artiste" category work permits to work in the cabaret industry and on tourist visas to work in massage parlors disguised as private apartments. During the period April 1, 2007 to February 29, 2008, the government issued 2,522 "artiste" category work permits; however, the actual number of women working in cabarets was much lower due to multiple entries. There are no available estimates on the number of women working in massage parlors. No work permits were issued to women for work as barmaids

during the period. All the women identified as victims have or will testify in court cases against their traffickers/employers. Sources of information include government agencies, local and international NGOs, and the media. The Embassy has a long-standing relationship with these sources and considers them reliable. Trafficking victims are usually women in their twenties and thirties, although their ages range from 15 to 44. There were two underage girls among the victims, a 15-year-old Russian and a 17-year-old British girl. The first was forced into prostitution by her Russian mother and Turkish Cypriot stepfather. The British girl, a permanent resident of Cyprus, ran away from home and was employed in a pub where she was pressured to have sex with customers.

1B. The government continued to demonstrate at the highest levels the political will to address trafficking. In July 2007 the government enacted revised anti-TIP legislation which expanded victims' rights and established new mechanisms to monitor and evaluate implementation of anti-TIP legislation and policies. In October 2007 the government ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings; the Convention came into force for the EU on February 1, 2008. In November 2007 the government opened the first state-owned shelter for trafficking victims. The police actively investigated trafficking cases, but the numbers of cases investigated, police raids and undercover operations, convictions of traffickers, and identified victims declined compared to the previous reporting period. Foreign women, primarily from Asia, Eastern Europe and South America are trafficked to Cyprus for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Traffickers fraudulently recruited victims in their home countries using the "artiste" work permit for work in cabarets. The police reported an increase in 2007 of cases of women who arrived on tourist visas and then worked out of private apartments

NICOSIA 00000181 002.2 OF 007

offering sex services. Some of those women were identified as trafficking victims after undercover police operations. Traffickers in source countries often cooperated with artiste agents/impresarios in Cyprus. Many women came to work as performers in cabarets but were often pressured by the impresarios and the cabaret owners to provide sexual services to cabaret customers. Artiste agents/impresarios operate employment agencies specializing in employment of cabaret workers. Traffickers use debt bondage, i.e., they pressure the victims into prostitution to pay off their debts incurred from air tickets, impresario fees and medical tests. Traffickers often confiscate victims' passports. There was one case of a victim who was provided with a false passport.

1C. The Ministries of Interior, Labor and Social Insurance, Justice and Public Order, Health, Education, and the Attorney General's Office share responsibility for combating trafficking, with the Ministry of Interior as the lead entity.

1D. The government does not lack the resources to combat trafficking; however, most relevant government agencies complain about the lack of staffing and training for anti-TIP efforts. TIP-associated corruption is not considered a problem. During the reporting period, seven police officers were prosecuted for involvement in two separate trafficking-related cases. See para. 3J.

1E. Per the new anti-TIP law, government anti-trafficking efforts are coordinated and evaluated by the Ministry of Interior, which serves as the national coordinator for the Multi-disciplinary Coordinating Group (MCG), a body comprised of all government agencies and two NGOs involved in anti-trafficking efforts. The MCG is supposed to meet monthly. As of March 2008, NGOs have not as yet participated officially in the MCG meetings because the procedure for selecting the two NGOs is still ongoing. The MCG is mandated by law to prepare an annual report evaluating government

efforts to combat trafficking. The first report will cover the period July 2007 to June 2008. The government reports its anti-trafficking efforts to the UN, EU, OSCE, and, when requested, to international NGOs and to the local and international media.

¶4. (SBU) Answers in this para are keyed to the questions in reftel, para 28, "Investigation and Prosecution of Traffickers."

¶A. On July 13, 2007, Law 87(I)/2007, entitled "Combating Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Beings and Protecting Victims Rights" went into force and replaced the existing (3(I)2000) law on "Combating Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Adults and Minors." The stated purpose of the new law is "to criminalize trafficking in persons, the exploitation of persons and child pornography, to take measures for the protection and support of victims from the aforementioned crimes, and to create the mechanism to monitor the implementation of these measures." It covers both internal and external forms of trafficking. Other laws used to prosecute TIP cases include:

- ¶1. The Protection of Witnesses Law of 2001, Law 95(I)/2001
- ¶2. The Law ratifying the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its Supplementary Protocols, Law 11(III)/2003
- ¶3. The Prevention and Suppression of Money Laundering Activities Law, Law 61(I)/1996
- ¶4. The Aliens and Immigration Law, Cap. 105 (as amended) and Regulations

NICOSIA 00000181 003.2 OF 007

- ¶5. The Criminal Code, Cap. 154
- ¶6. The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law, Law 119(I)/2000 (as amended)
- ¶7. The Compensation to Victims of Violent Crimes Law, Law 51(I)/97

¶B. Trafficking of adults is punishable by up to 15 years in prison and trafficking of children is punishable by up to 20 years in prison. Sexual exploitation of adults is punishable by up to 10 years in prison and of minors by up to 20 years. The government has convicted eight people charged with trafficking for sexual exploitation since April 1, 2007. Sentences range from three and a half years imprisonment to four months imprisonment with three years probation. None of the convicted traffickers received a suspended sentence or only a fine as punishment.

¶C. As stated in the previous paragraph, trafficking of adults is punishable by up to 15 years imprisonment and trafficking of children is punishable by up to 20 years. Labor exploitation is punishable by up to six years imprisonment and up to 10 years if the victim is a minor. Withholding a victim's passport or travel documents, including their alien card and/or residency permit, is a crime punishable by up to five years imprisonment and/or a fine of up to 10,000 Euros (USD 15,213). Switching contracts without the worker's consent is illegal. No one has been charged with trafficking for labor exploitation in the period under review.

¶D. The law criminalizes rape with a maximum sentence of life in prison. Most convicted rapists received considerably less than the maximum sentence; however, sentences for rape are generally higher than sentences for commercial sexual exploitation.

¶E. Prostitution is not illegal but many acts related to prostitution, e.g., living off the proceeds of prostitution, promoting a woman for prostitution, maintaining, managing or participating in the operation of a brothel, forced detention of a woman in a brothel, and assistance to a woman in performing prostitution are criminalized. The legal minimum age for prostitution is 18 years of age.

¶F. In the period April 1, 2007 to February 20, 2008 the government opened 27 cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation for investigation. Eight of those cases are still under investigation and 17 were sent to court. Of those 17 cases, 11 are still pending trial, four were suspended, and two were dismissed. Of the 36 cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation pending trial at the end of the previous reporting period, eight resulted in convictions, 14 in acquittals, 3 were dismissed by the Courts, one was withdrawn, one was otherwise disposed of and nine are still pending trial. Sentences ranged from three and half years to four months imprisonment with three years probation. Though all the above cases were prepared for trial under the anti-TIP law, all offenders were convicted for prostitution-related crimes. The sentences have been served.

¶G. Police officers receive specialized training on how to recognize, investigate and prosecute cases of trafficking at the Cyprus Police Academy. In addition to this specialized training, in 2007, 88 police officers attended a four-week seminar at the Cyprus Police Academy on how to organize anti-TIP operations, interpret the new anti-TIP law, gather intelligence, and assess victims' behavior. Social Welfare Services personnel, who are responsible for providing services to victims of trafficking, received training in

NICOSIA 00000181 004.2 OF 007

Cyprus and abroad during the reporting period.

¶H. The Cyprus Police cooperated in 16 cases of trafficking in EU countries via Europol, and in 10 cases of trafficking in non-EU countries via Interpol.

¶I. The ROC Constitution bars the extradition of Cypriot citizens. Non-Cypriots may be extradited but there were no such cases during the reporting period.

¶J. There is no evidence of government involvement in, or tolerance of, trafficking on a local or institutional level.

¶K. The government investigated seven police officers involved in two separate trafficking-related cases. The government acted promptly and decisively and all seven were prosecuted for disciplinary offenses.

¶L. N/A

¶M. N/A

¶5. (SBU) Answers in this para are keyed to the questions in reftel, para 29, "Protection and Assistance to the Victims."

¶A. Existing legislation allows identified victims a minimum of one month as a reflection period to recover from their experience and to decide whether or not they wish to cooperate with the police and testify in a trial. Victims who decide to cooperate with the police have their temporary residence permits renewed until the police investigation and court trial are completed. They are placed under the care of the Social Welfare Services, which act as the guardian of victims of trafficking, and have the right to work.

¶B. The government opened its first shelter for trafficking victims, run by Social Welfare Services, on November 26, 2007. The shelter had housed a total of 16 victims by the end of February. The law does not differentiate between foreign and domestic victims of trafficking. Before the opening of the government shelter, victims were placed in eldercare facilities run by Social Welfare Services. During 2007, the Social Welfare Services provided shelter and services to a total of 87 victims. In addition to the 16 who stayed at the new shelter, 23 victims stayed at the eldercare facilities and 38 chose to stay in private apartments or with friends. The government provides victims with free medical, legal and psychological care, assistance to find employment and access to programs provided by the government and/or NGOs to acquire

or improve professional skills and prepare for repatriation. The government could not provide an estimate of the amount spent on specialized facilities dedicated to assisting TIP victims.

¶C. The government provided two USD 25,000 grants (totaling USD 50,000) to the NGO "Stigma," which operated the only shelter in the island until November 2007. STIGMA offered shelter and services to a total of 30 trafficking victims in ¶2007.

¶D. The police actively investigated cases of trafficking resulting from evidence collected during unannounced raids and undercover operations in cabarets, pubs and private apartments suspected of being used for prostitution, as well as from complaints submitted directly by trafficking victims to the police, other government agencies and NGOs. The police reported an increase in the number of victims directly contacting the police, although they were unable to provide precise figures. In the period April 1, 2007 to February

NICOSIA 00000181 005.2 OF 007

20,2008 the police conducted 120 raids and 26 undercover operations in cabarets, pubs, and other suspected places. During the same period, 40 women were identified as trafficking victims. Government agencies operate according to the "Manual for Interdepartmental Procedures for Handling Cases of Trafficking Victims." The manual is currently being revised to incorporate new regulations stipulated by the new anti-TIP law. Victims are immediately placed in the custody of the Social Welfare Services and are sent to the shelter.

¶E. N/A

¶F. The rights of victims are generally respected. Trafficking victims are not detained, jailed or fined regardless of whether they chose to cooperate with the police or not. During the reporting period, two foreign women were charged with maintaining a brothel and residing in the country illegally. As soon as the government identified the two women as trafficking victims, it dropped the charges and treated them as victims of trafficking.

¶G. The government encourages victims to assist in the investigation and prosecution of their traffickers. In the period April 1, 2007 to February 20,2008, the government identified 40 victims, all of whom agreed to assist in the investigation and prosecution of their traffickers. However, nine of the victims who had agreed to cooperate with authorities left the country without testifying in court; some of them complained about the long duration of the trial, which usually lasts over a year. Victims may bring civil suits against their traffickers and seek damages. They also have the right to seek compensation from the Cyprus Government pursuant to the provisions of the EU Convention for the Compensation of Victims of Violent Crimes. Victims who are witnesses in court cases are allowed to seek alternate employment and are allowed to leave the country temporarily. No one impedes victim access to legal redress.

¶H. Under existing legislation, the government is required to protect trafficking victims and witnesses in trafficking cases. This includes providing police protection, shelter, counseling, legal aid, and medical and psychiatric care to help victims recover from their traumatic experiences. Before the opening of the government-run shelter in November 2007, victims were housed in dedicated rooms in state-owned eldercare facilities, at the NGO Stigma shelter, and in private apartments. The government provides a housing allowance and financial assistance based on individual needs to victims who choose to stay with friends or rent apartments. Victims who decide to remain in Cyprus after the reflection period to assist in the police investigation and testify in court are encouraged and assisted to find alternate employment and are granted access to government or



NGO programs to acquire or improve professional skills. All 40 victims identified during the reporting period were assisted by government-funded programs and received shelter services

I. The government provides specialized training to government officials handling trafficking cases. Special courses on trafficking are taught at the Cyprus Police Academy and the police anti-TIP unit has participated in two five-day seminars of CEPOL- European Police College in June and November 2007. The Social Welfare Service organized an education seminar in November 2007 for the training of all Social Welfare personnel handling trafficking victims. This training is not extended to Cypriot Embassies and Consulates in destination and transit countries.

NICOSIA 00000181 006.2 OF 007

J. N/A

K. The NGO Stigma offers services to victims of trafficking and has received funding from the government. Stigma cooperates with STOP International. Stigma received two USD 25,000 grants from the government during the reporting period. Stigma actively locates victims and offers shelter, counseling, psychological and financial support, helps victims to find alternate employment, and prepares them for repatriation in cooperation with NGOs in their home countries.

6. Answers in this para are keyed to the request in reftel, para 30, "Prevention."

A. The government acknowledges that trafficking is a problem and is committed at the highest levels to combating it.

B. In March and April 2007 the government ran the first phase of a demand-reduction campaign which included 50,000 flyers and 800 posters. During the same period it aired two UN-sponsored anti-TIP spots on state TV, which broadcasts all over Cyprus. The government has allocated an additional USD 62,417 for FY 2008 and started the bidding process for the second phase of the campaign, which government sources estimate will launch in the second half of April 2008. The second phase will include billboards, TV spots and seminars. This campaign is designed to inform the public and reduce demand.

C. The government consults with the few NGOs that are involved in trafficking on matters related to legislation, services to victims, and public awareness efforts. Pursuant to the provisions of Law 87(1)2007, the government published invitations to NGOs in newspapers on February 1, 2008, seeking participation in the MCG. Three NGOs have declared their interest in participating, and the government is evaluating their applications in order to select two.

D. Immigration police monitor immigration and emigration patterns for evidence of trafficking. As of February 2007, artiste category work permits are sent directly to ROC embassies and consulates in source countries, to be personally collected by the employee-migrant. Consular or administrative staff brief the employee-migrant and provide her with a brochure, in her own language, containing employment information, rights and obligations, and emergency services contact information. The employee-migrant is required to sign a statement saying that she was briefed and received the information brochure.

E. The MCG coordinates communication between all entities, internal and international, on matters related to trafficking. The MCG is chaired by the Minister of Interior, who is the designated National Coordinator for action against trafficking and acts as the single point of contact for trafficking-related matters. There is no public corruption task force. However, there is a government-appointed independent committee that examines complaints against the

police, including complaints involving corruption.

¶F. The government adopted a national plan of action in May 2005. It was drafted by a group of experts at the Attorney General's office with input from the Ministries of Interior, Labor and Social Insurance, Justice and Public Order, Commerce, Industry and Tourism, the Ombudsman and NGOs. The action plan has been distributed to all government agencies, to NGOs, and to international organizations, and is available in electronic form, in both the Greek and English languages, from the Ministry of Interior.

NICOSIA 00000181 007.2 OF 007

¶G. In addition to the first phase of the demand reduction campaign launched in March and April 2007 by the Ministry of Interior (see para 6 (B) above), the head of the police anti-TIP unit appeared once on state-run TV to discuss the problem of trafficking and gave several interviews to local newspapers and magazines. The head of the police anti-TIP unit made a presentation at the US Embassy anti-TIP film series in November 2007 and a similar presentation at a seminar organized by the European Party in collaboration with STOP International in October 2007. The Ministry of Interior continued to produce and distribute informational brochures for artiste-category workers that explained the terms and conditions of employment, the risks involved, the services offered by the government to trafficking victims. The brochures also provide contact information for all relevant government departments and NGOs, and note the Police 24-hour helpline number. They are available in Russian, Bulgarian, Romanian and English, and are distributed to Cypriot embassies and consulates in source countries, to be given to artist-work permit applicants when they visit the embassy/consulate to collect their work permit. The brochure is also posted on the website of the Ministry of Interior and is distributed to government departments visited by artiste-category workers after their arrival in Cyprus. Moreover, the Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance produces and distributes, in Greek and English, the "Guide for the Rights and Obligations of Foreign Employees." This guide is available at all government departments visited by foreign workers.

¶H. Law 87(I)2007 criminalizes sexual exploitation of children, to include paying children for sexual intercourse or other sexual activities. It covers the commitment of the crime by Cypriots in foreign countries and is punishable by up to 20 years imprisonment. There were no such cases during the reporting period.

¶7. Answers in this para are keyed to the request in reftel, para 31, "Heroes."

¶A. Mine Yucel, Prologue Consulting, Ltd. Mine Yucel is an anti-trafficking pioneer in the Cypriot community for her research on the trafficking problem and her efforts to combat trafficking. Yucel has fearlessly and creatively conducted field research in the dangerous underworld of "cabarets", i.e., brothels and nightclubs. She has spoken with nightclub managers, cabaret owners, medical personnel and trafficking victims in conducting her research, bringing the subject of trafficking out of the shadows and into the public consciousness. She gives a voice to the victims who before were silent and ignored, and travels around northern Cyprus publicizing the plight of victims and the scope of trafficking there.  
SCHLICHER